



UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER
ANNUAL REPORT
FALL 2022 - SUMMER 2023



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
University Writing Center

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Our unit is under the guidance of Dr. Timothy Scott, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year the University Writing Center (UWC) saw the retirement of our founder and long-time executive director, Dr. Valerie Balester, who spent 32 years at Texas A&M. Dr. Balester's professional accomplishments were extensive, but the one that stands out to me is her leadership in developing the W course requirement (and later, C course) in response to a call for improved communication skills for Aggies. These courses remain a key component of undergraduate education at Texas A&M to this day.

At the time of her departure, Dr. Balester served as the Undergraduate Ombuds, as well as the executive director of both the UWC and the Academic Success Center. She was also a full professor in the department of English, an assistant provost for Undergraduate Studies, and chair of the W & C Course Committee. No one was surprised, therefore, when it took five people to fill her place; I feel fortunate to have been named Executive Director of the UWC, an organization I have worked for since 2002.

**“THE UWC REMAINS
COMMITTED TO
HELPING AGGIES
BECOME BETTER
COMMUNICATORS.”**

The W & C Course Committee is now chaired by Dr. Matt McKinney, assistant professor in the Department of English, who has been named the Interim Director of the Writing in the Disciplines Program. My thanks to Matt for taking on that role and to the UWC's Senior Administrative Coordinator II, Donna Pantel, for handling so much of the administrative work of the W & C courses.

In the midst of these and other changes, the UWC remains committed to helping Aggies become better communicators. We do this work by offering individual consultations with peer writing consultants and through workshops, events, and a wealth of online materials. At the heart of all we do are our peer consultants—a group of remarkable undergrads and graduate students who undergo training to earn certification from the College Reading and Learning Association. Their dedication to helping their fellow students is a constant source of inspiration.

I want to mention one important event this year not documented elsewhere in this report: In January of 2023, the UWC received a generous gift from the Association of Former Students, money we used to defray the cost of student wages for 12 of our student workers. The funds benefitted both the student workers themselves and the many Aggies they helped through our services. We thank the Association for their support and commitment to promoting student success.

We hope this report of our activities gives you a sense of the scope of work being done by the University Writing Center and suggests the ways in which we can continue to expand and build upon the center founded by Dr. Balester.

Nancy Vazquez
Executive Director, University Writing Center

ABOUT CONSULTATIONS

The mission of the University Writing Center is to help Aggies become more confident and capable communicators, and consultations remain our core service. Our trained peer consultants, who stem from a variety of disciplines, provide support for Aggies working on any kind of writing or speaking assignment, at any stage in the creative process.

We offer three types of peer consulting options for undergraduate and graduate students. Our in-person consultations take place at one of our two physical locations—our main location in Evans Library and our satellite drop-in center at the Business Library and Collaboration Commons (BLCC). We also provide online synchronous consultations where students meet via Zoom and asynchronous online consultations where students upload a document via email. We also offer support for students for whom English is not their primary language and assistance for students working collaboratively in groups.



“

“MY CONSULTANT BROUGHT MEGA STICKY NOTES AND COLORED MARKERS TO OUR MEETINGS, SO WHAT’S NOT TO LOVE?”

”

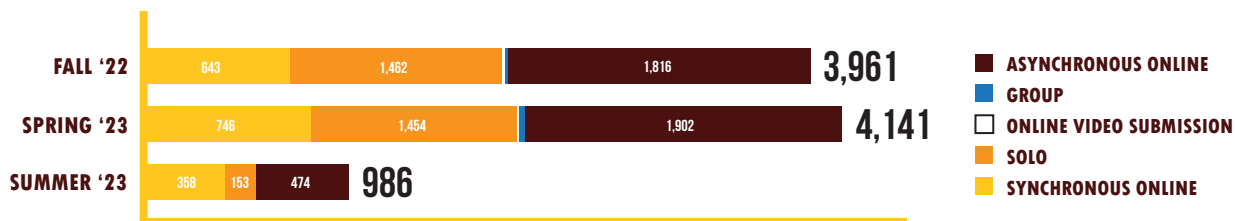
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“I believe my consultant did a very great job giving me tips on how to write my arguments more concisely and create a more informative tone for my essay. They were very nice and friendly, which made me feel less anxious.”

”

2022 - 2023 CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHTS

CONSULTATIONS



We count our consultations both by unique users of our services (students who have at least one appointment) and by total consultations. Since some students will have multiple consultations, we present the per-consultation data to show students as percentages of our total consultations.

- **4663** unique student visits
- **3069** in-person consultations
- **4193** asynchronous online (email) consultations
- **1746** synchronous consultations via Zoom
- **75** group appointments
- **35**-minute average duration for consultations

9,088 TOTAL CONSULTATIONS FOR THE YEAR
3,909 UNIQUE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
740 UNIQUE GRADUATE STUDENTS

1,501 STUDENTS WHO HAD MULTIPLE SESSIONS

753 STUDENTS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS NOT THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

12.47% OF STUDENTS LEFT SURVEY REVIEWS



Students are invited to leave reviews of their consultations. During this academic year, we received 1133 survey responses for 9088 consultations. Our average Likert score for consultation satisfaction was 4.75 out of 5. (A score of 4 means 'satisfied' while a score of 5 means 'very 'satisfied.')

We hope to encourage future feedback by including signage asking for reviews in our consultation areas.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY ABOUT THEIR CONSULTATIONS

“

“I GOT A HUNDRED ON MY PAPER! I WORKED WITH TWO CONSULTANTS, ONE IN TRAINING, BUT THEY WERE BOTH AMAZING!”

”



My session with my consultant was so fruitful! We kept it super informal and casual, which I think helped me in my thinking process. She was also the perfect sounding board as she made such great points and asked such great questions to my comments which helped me a lot!”

“My appointment was extremely helpful, and my consultant allowed me to express my ideas in the best way possible. I would recommend that any student with a writing assignment go through the Writing Center.”



“

“My consultant gave me very detailed comments and helpful tips on where to go next in my writing! It was the friendly and constructive criticism I needed. I got my first post grad job interview with the resume she reviewed!”

”

WHO WE SERVE

Consultations are open to both undergraduate and graduate students. For the 2022-2023 academic year, the writing center had 3,909 unique undergraduate clients and 740 unique graduate clients. The writing center also sees students from every college.

- Seniors (**1971**) were overwhelmingly the largest users of our service
- The largest number of students came from the College of Arts & Sciences (**1630**) and the College of Engineering (**1002**)

CLIENTS



CLIENTS BY CLASSIFICATION

First Year Undergraduates (U1)	535	Professional-level Graduates (G6)	4
Second Year Undergraduates (U2)	715	Master-level Graduates (G7)	396
Third Year Undergraduates (U3)	734	Doctoral-level Graduates (G8)	338
Fourth Year Undergraduates (U4)	1971	Health Science Center	18
Fifth Year Undergraduates (U5)	19		

CLIENTS BY COLLEGE

Agriculture & Life Sciences	523	Mays Business School	323
Architecture School	121	Medicine School	12
Arts & Sciences	1630	Nursing School	40
Bush School of Gov & Pub Serv	194	Perf, Visual & Fine Arts	38
Dentistry	30	Public Health	401
Education & Human Development	327	Veterinary Med & Bio Sciences	19
Engineering	1002		

WHO WE SERVE

UNIQUE CLIENTELE DEMOGRAPHICS

First generation students made up nearly a quarter of all unique UWC undergraduate students (Figure 1).

FIRST GEN PERCENTAGES AMONG UNIQUE UNDERGRADUATE CLIENTS

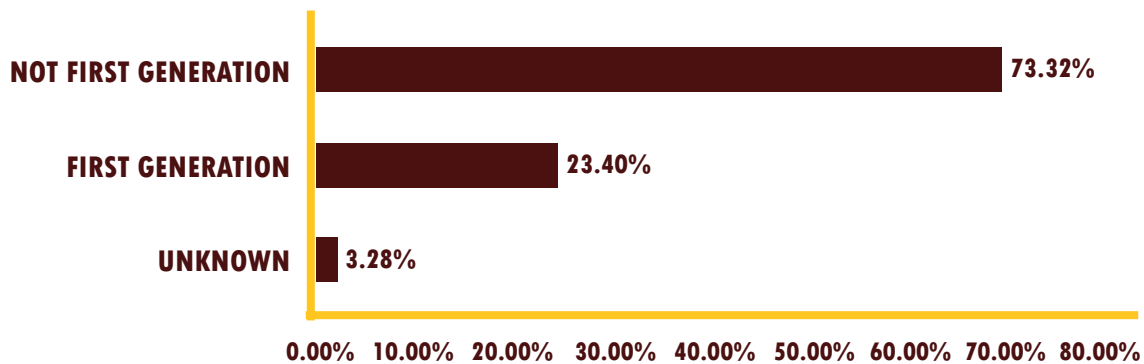


Figure 1

Figure 2 indicates the percentage distribution of ethnic origin per undergraduate consultation.

PERCENTAGES OF ALL AY 22-23 UNDERGRADUATE UWC CONSULTATIONS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CLIENTS

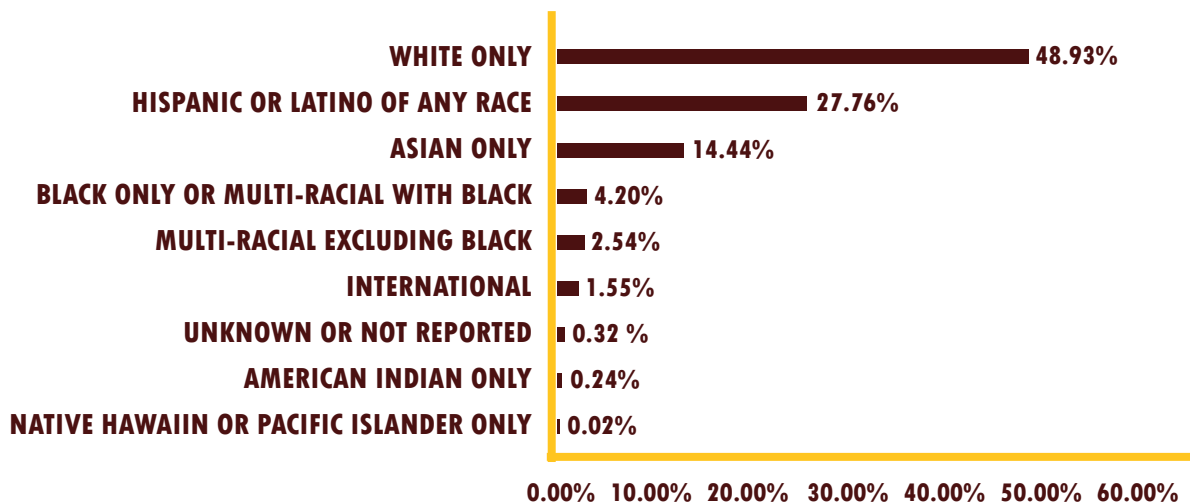


Figure 2

WHO WE SERVE

Figure 3 indicates the percentage distribution of ethnic origin per graduate consultation.

PERCENTAGES OF ALL AY 22-23 GRADUATE UWC CONSULTATIONS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CLIENTS

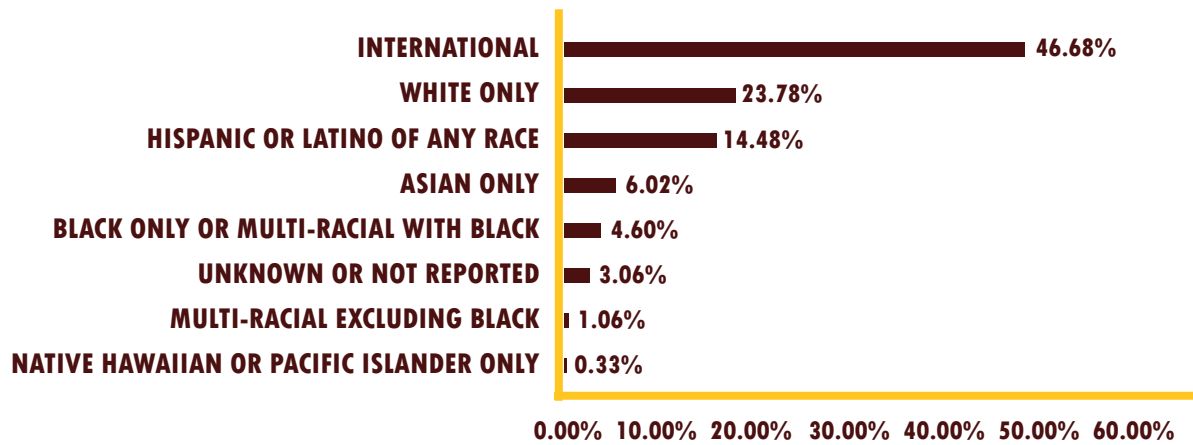


Figure 3

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS



Students wrote their goals on the UWC's graffiti wall at Library Open House

23.40% OF UNDERGRADUATE CLIENTS SELF-IDENTIFIED AS FIRST-GENERATION

46.68% OF GRADUATE CONSULTATIONS WERE WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

753 STUDENTS INDICATED THAT ENGLISH WAS NOT THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

PROGRAMS

We support both undergraduate and graduate students through consultations, as well as through a variety of additional programs. These programs include writing retreats for undergraduates and graduates, online writing accountability groups, and a specialized consultation program for students working on longer documents such as theses or dissertations.

Final Paper Countdown is an undergraduate writing retreat where students work on final projects and papers in a quiet, productive environment, with opportunities to receive coaching from consultants while they write.

Dissertation, Article, and Thesis Assistance (DATA) assigns a specific consultant to work with an undergraduate or graduate student for up to 10 sessions while focusing on goal setting and accountability.

Thesis and Dissertation Retreats allow graduates to work on their writing for four full days while receiving daily coaching from consultants and staff. These retreats were conducted online though Zoom.

Write Line is a virtual graduate student writing group via Zoom. Write Line provides a productive virtual writing space so students can stay accountable to their writing goals. Multiple groups meet at various days and times during the semester.

Graduate Student Workshops address graduate-specific topics such as preparing a literature review, writing grant proposals, and giving conference presentations. These workshops are offered as part of the GRAD Aggies Professional development program.

2022-2023 PROGRAM NUMBERS

- **101** Final Paper Countdown student clients (spring only)
- **104** DATA student clients
- **71** Thesis and Dissertation Retreat participants
- **76** Write Line participants
- **257** Graduate Student Workshop participants

WHAT STUDENTS SAY ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

“

“Write Line was incredibly useful for accountability. I struggle with stepping away from the lab and keeping time set aside for myself. The tips and tricks covered in the first couple of weeks (like writing breaks and keeping a writing log) are great tools. I also found it very helpful hearing about the struggles others face with writing and knowing I am not alone in those.”

”



“

The dissertation writing retreat was a wonderful opportunity for me to accelerate my dissertation writing. I got so much more writing done in those four days than I had on the other days when I wrote by myself. This experience is invaluable for students working on dissertation/thesis writing.”

”

“HAD AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE! HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE DATA PROGRAM, IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT I WOULD BE READY TO DEFEND MY DISSERTATION IN JUNE. I FEEL LIKE THIS PROGRAM REALLY TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT WRITING AS I HAVE NOT HAD VERY MUCH MENTORSHIP IN WRITING BEFORE. I AM REALLY THANKFUL THIS PROGRAM EXISTS.”

SUPPORT FOR COURSES

Beyond supporting students through consultations and programs, we provide support for communication instruction, including W (Writing) and C (Communication) courses through our classroom workshop program and our support of the Texas A&M Writing & Communication Course (W & C) Committee. Additional resources for faculty teaching writing or speaking are provided on our website.

CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS

Instructors can request classroom workshops on writing, speaking, and research topics for both graduate and undergraduate courses, which are conducted by peer consultants and staff. We offer 12 workshop topics that instructors can customize.

- 179 workshops were conducted for 5910 students
- 36 requests were for Overview of UWC Services
- 33 requests were for Writing Clearly & Concisely

“THE PRESENTER WAS OUTSTANDING. SHE WAS INFORMATIVE, ENTERTAINING, AND ENGAGING. MY STUDENTS GOT A LOT OUT OF THE PRESENTATION, AND TOLD ME SO AFTER.”

WRITING AND COMMUNICATION (W & C) COURSES

W & C courses are designed and administered within departments and approved for a period of four years by the W & C Course Advisory Committee and the Faculty Senate. All TAMU students must pass two W courses or one W and one C course in their major that fulfill the graduation requirement.

- Students in W & C courses who had one (or more) writing center consultations scored, on average, a 0.2 higher GPA for that W or C course than those students from the same course who did not have a UWC consultation (Fig. 4)

COMPARISON OF W & C COURSE STUDENTS WITH OR WITHOUT UWC CONSULTATION

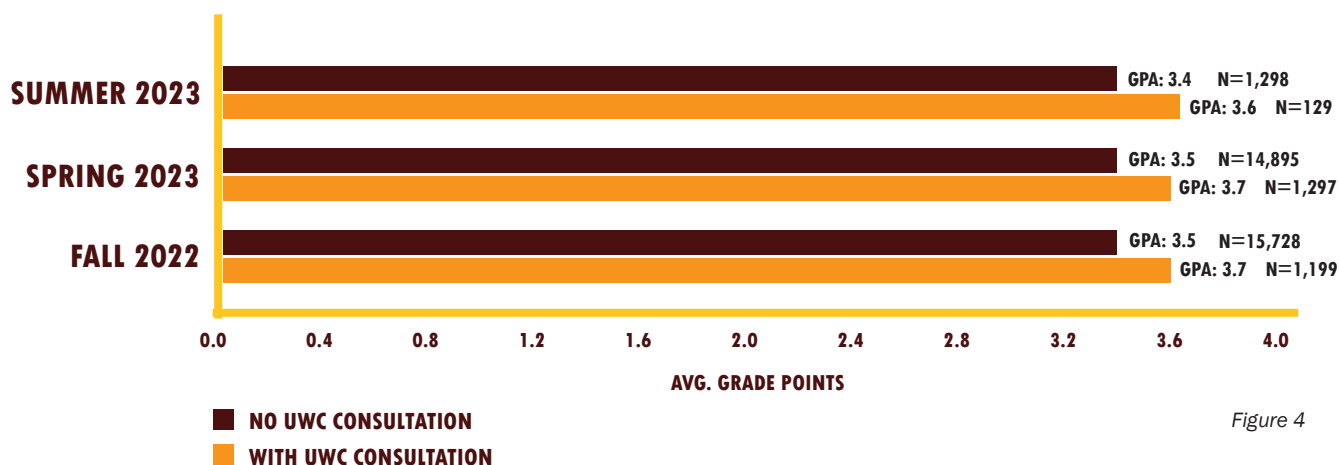


Figure 4

OUR STAFF

PEER CONSULTANTS

Our writing and speaking consultants are undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of majors and disciplines. We typically employ 45-50 writing consultants each year. During our hiring season in March, we usually hire between 20-25 consultants depending on how many consultants are returning.

To develop their tutoring skills, our consultants participate in regular training throughout the fall and spring semester through observations, as well as weekly staff or team meetings on various training topics. Newly hired consultants also go through a period of observations and conduct co-sessions with their more experienced peers.

Our consultants also receive additional training and professional certification from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), with the opportunity to receive up to three levels of tutor certification: beginning, advanced, and master. Only the first level is required for all consultants, while the second and third levels are optional and tied to pay raises.

FAST FACTS

- **33** new consultants (8 graduate and 25 undergraduate students) were hired
- **20** consultants returned from the previous cohort
- **31** consultants were certified as CRLA Level 1 beginning tutors
- **16** consultants were certified as CRLA Level 2 advanced tutors
- **8** consultants were certified as CRLA Level 3 master tutors
- Undergraduate consultants Annemarie Hoffzimmer and Bex Wilson were invited to submit a chapter, "Moving Forward in Writing Center Spaces: The Benefits of Movement Consultations," for a forthcoming writing center publication



Consultants and staff at the NCPTW Conference

CONSULTANTS ON WORKING AT THE UWC

I appreciate all the skills I've learned here. I feel so lucky that I can say I've worked here.

OUR STAFF

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The writing center professional staff consists of full-time writing consultants (Level I through III), assistant directors, and an executive director managing the operations of the center including leading teams of peer consultants. The staff also includes a Senior Administrative Coordinator II and Administrative Associate III, who oversee office operations.

FAST FACTS

- Macy Dunklin joined the full-time staff as a Writing Consultant I in December 2022
- Chelsea Oldham joined the full-time staff as an Administrative Associate III in March 2023
- In April, Assistant Director Florence Davies was selected as 2023 President's Meritorious Service Award recipient
- In June, Nancy Vazquez was promoted from Director to Executive Director, due to Dr. Valerie Balester's retirement
- In October, 4 consultants and staff presented at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring and Writing (NCPTW) hosted by the University of Nebraska Omaha
- In November, 14 consultants and staff presented at the International Writing Center Association Conference in Vancouver, Canada



Dr. Balester offers words of wisdom to the staff



Consultants and staff at IWCA

OUTREACH

We employ two student media interns who are supervised by Assistant Director Florence Davies. They create entertaining content for the UWC's social media accounts and educational content for the UWC's robust, long-standing YouTube channel.

YOUTUBE HIGHLIGHTS

The UWC's YouTube channel, which hosts several curated playlists of writing and speaking videos, had 22,300 subscribers total in AY 22-23.

- #4 YouTube channel at Texas A&M University (after #1 Texas A&M Athletics, #2 TAMU Physics, and #3 the main Texas A&M channel)
- 436,056 video views for 2022-2023
- 1.6K new followers in AY 22-23

TOP 5 YOUTUBE VIDEOS FOR AY 22-23

1. Ethos, Pathos & Logos – 210,093 views
2. Active and Passive Voice – 35,812 views
3. Toulmin Method – 30,128 views
4. Semicolons and Colons – 25,933 views
5. Get Lit: The Literature Review – 25,432 views



UWC hosts its annual Valentine's Day card-making table

EVENTS

In addition to our classroom workshop program, we receive requests to deliver topical presentations to organizations and student groups outside of class time. We also conduct outreach events like our annual Valentine's Day card-making table to raise awareness about the writing center.

In AY 22-23, we conducted 72 events and reached 3,334 people. Other outreach events include collaborative presentations with our Undergraduate Studies campus partners, which included the Academic Success Center, Math Learning Center, Office of Student Success, and the Routh First Generation Center. "Your Aggie Toolkit" was a college success strategy presentation that reached an audience of over 3,385 parents and incoming Aggies at New Student Conferences.